

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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McGarvey 202/343-5634

DECISION ON WALRUS MORATORIUM

An Administrative Law Judge of the Department of the Interior's Office of Hearings and Appeals has recommended that the moratorium on the taking of Pacific walrus be lifted and that the management of this animal be returned to the State of Alaska under a joint Federal/State management program.

The judge found that based upon the best scientific evidence available it is appropriate under the Marine Mammal Protection Act to waive the moratorium to allow taking up to 3,000 retrieved walrus per year. The Administrative Law Judge concluded that subject to several recommendations set forth in his opinion, the State of Alaska regulations should be approved, and the State/Federal management program for Pacific walrus should be adopted on the conditions specified in his decision. Among other things, the Administrative Law Judge recommended that if the harvest exceeds 3,000 in any one year the moratorium, in effect since 1972, would automatically be reimplemented.

Copies of the decision may be obtained in Room 536 at 1717 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., or by writing the Director, Attn: MNB, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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